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TO BARBARA

WITH OTHER VERSES

BY

DAVID STARR JORDAN



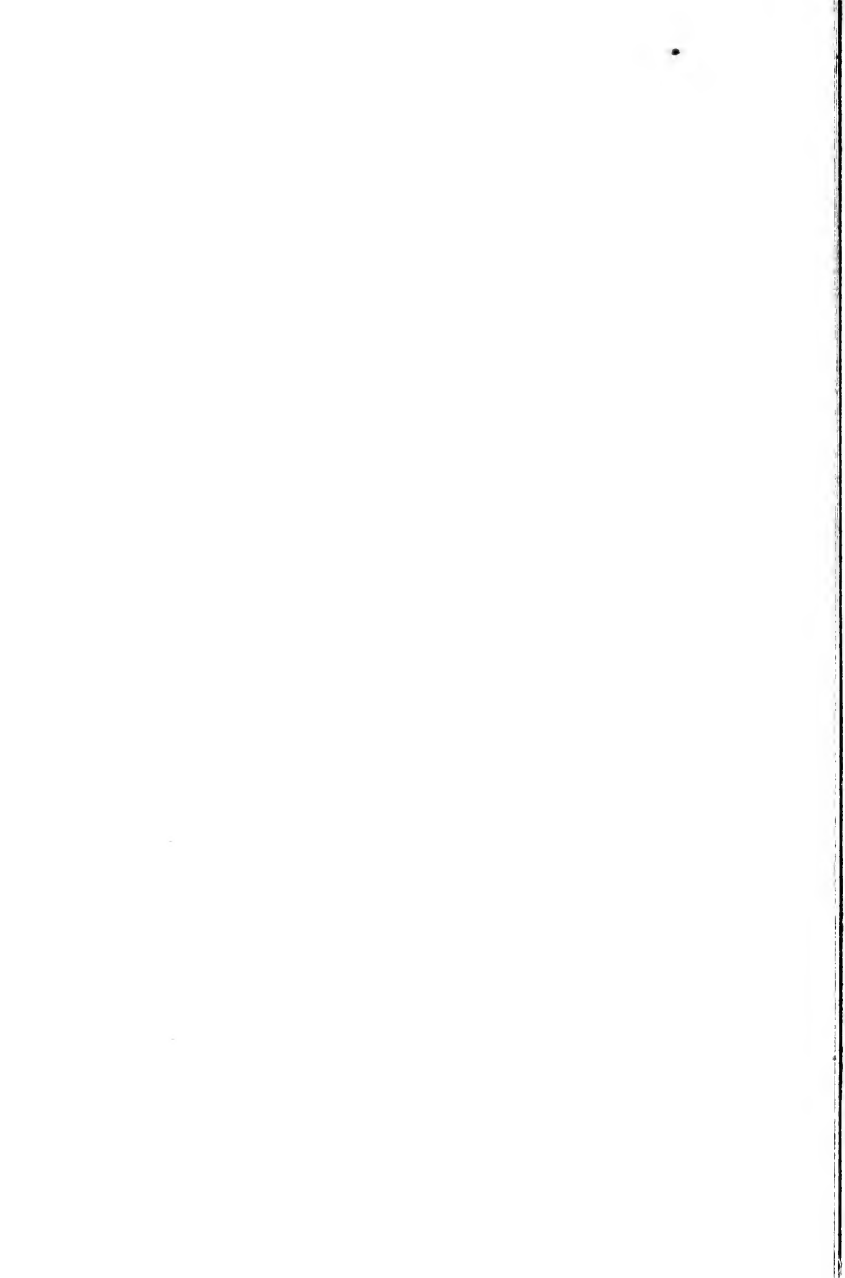
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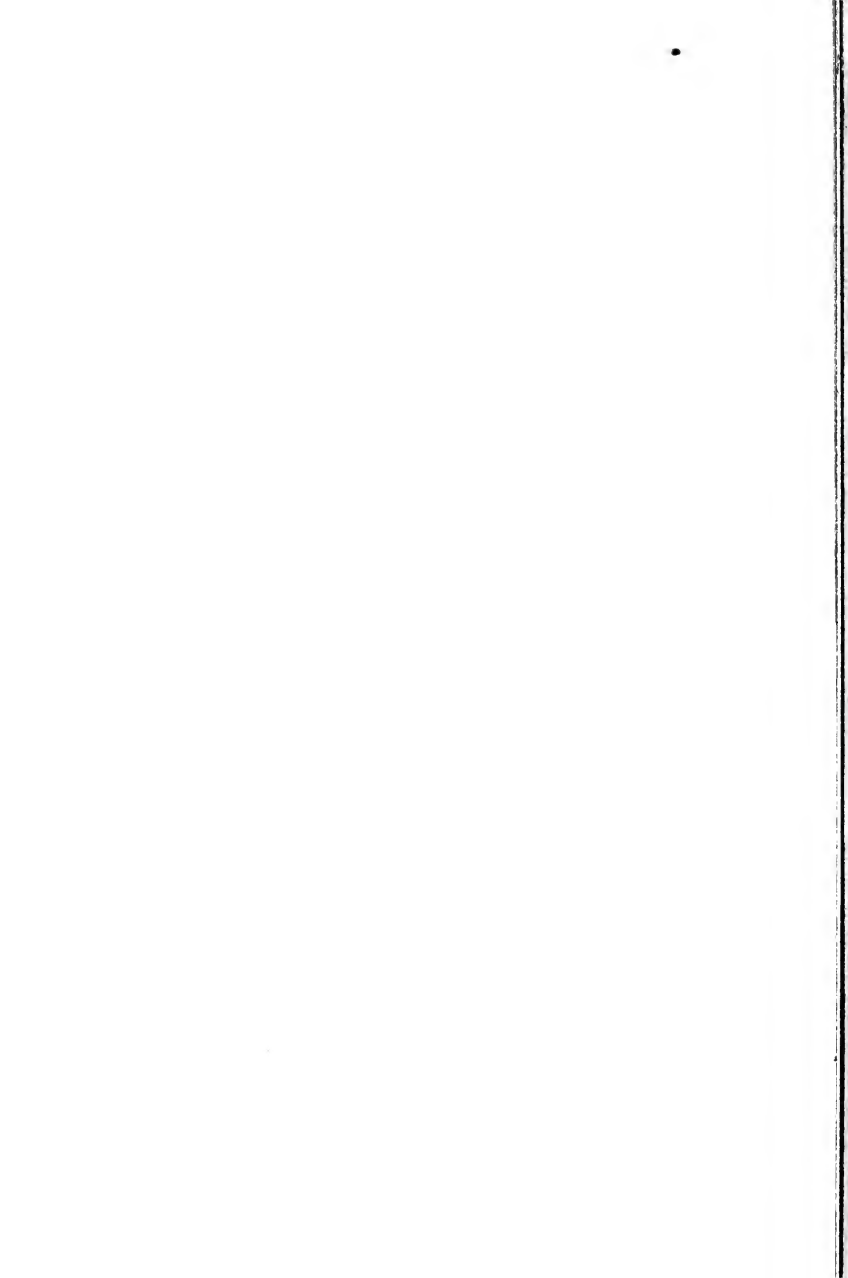
DAVID STARR JORDAN

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DAVID STARR JORDAN

TO THE MEMORY OF
A LITTLE GIRL
FOR WHOM AND FOR WHOSE MOTHER
THESE VERSES WERE WRITTEN



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TO BARBARA.

Little lady, cease your play,
For a moment, if you may;
Come to me, and tell me true
How those black eyes came to you.

Father's eyes are granite gray,
And your mother's, Barbara,
Black as the obsidian stone,
With a luster all their own.
How should one so small as you
Learn to choose between the two?

If through father's eyes you look,
Nature seems an open book,
All her secrets written clear
On her pages round you, dear.
Better yet than this may be
If through mother's eyes you see;
Theirs to read, a finer art,
Deep down in the human heart.
How should one so small as you
Choose so well between the two?

Hide your face behind your fan,
Little black-eyed Puritan;
Peer across its edge at me
In demurest coquetry,
Like some Doña Plácida,
Not the Puritan you are.

Subtle sorcery there lies
In the glances of your eyes,
Calling forth, from out the vast
Vaults of the forgotten past,
Pictures dim and far away
From the full life of to-day,
Like the figures that we see
Wrought in ancient tapestry.

This the vision comes to me:
Sheer rock rising from the sea,
Wind-riven, harsh, and vertical,
To a gray old castle wall;
Waving palms upon its height,
At its feet the breakers white,
Chasing o'er an emerald bay,
Like a flock of swans that play;
Tile-roofed houses of the town,
From the hills slow-creeping down;
Rocks and palms and castle wall,
Emerald seas that rise and fall,
Golden haze and glittering blue—
What is all of this to you?

Only this, perchance it be,
Each has left its trace in thee;
Only this, that Love is strong,
And the arm of Fate is long.

Deeply hidden in your eyes,
Undeciphered histories
Graven in the ages vast
Lie there to be read at last:
Graven deep, they must be true;
Shall I read them unto you?

Once a man, now faint and dim
With the centuries over him,
Wandered from an ancient town
On its hills slow-creeping down,
O'er the ocean, bold and free,
Roved in careless errantry;
With Vizcaino had he fared,
And his strange adventures dared;
Restless ever, drifting on,
Far as ship of man had gone;
On his cheek the salt that clings
To the Headland of the Kings,
Flung from the enchanted sea
Of Saint Francis Assisi.
Rover o'er the ocean blue—
What has he to do with you?

Only this: he sailed one day
To your Massachusetts Bay,
And this voyage was his last,
For Love seized and held him fast.
Of that old romance of his
None can tell you more than this;
Saving that, as legacies
To his child, he left his eyes,
Black as the obsidian stone,
With a luster all their own,
Seeing as by magic ken
Deep into the hearts of men.
And mid tides of changing years,
Dreams and hopes and cares and fears,
Life that flows and ebbs away,
Love has kept them loyally.

Once, it chanced, they came to shine
Straight into this heart of mine.

Little lady, cease your play
For a moment, if you may;
All I ask is, silently,
Turn your mother's eyes on me!

Consulado Inglés,
Calle de las Olas Altas,
Mazatlan, Sinaloa,
January 10, 1895.

MEN TOLD ME, LORD.

Men told me, Lord, it was a vale of tears
Where Thou hadst placed me, wickedness and woe
My twain companions whereso I might go;
That I through ten and three-score weary years
Should stumble on, beset by pains and fears,
Fierce conflict round me, passions hot within,
Enjoyment brief and fatal but in sin.
When all was ended then should I demand
Full compensation from Thine austere hand;
For, 'tis Thy pleasure, all temptation past,
To be not just but generous at last.

Lord, here am I, my three-score years and ten
All counted to the full; I've fought Thy fight,
Crossed Thy dark valleys, scaled Thy rocks' harsh
height,
Borne all Thy burdens Thou dost lay on men
With hand unsparing, three-score years and ten.
Before Thee now I make my claim, O Lord!
What shall I pray Thee as a meet reward?

I ask for nothing. Let the balance fall!
All that I am or know or may confess
But swells the weight of mine indebtedness;
Burdens and sorrows stand transfigured all;
Thy hand's rude buffet turns to a caress,
For Love, with all the rest, Thou gavest me here,
And Love is Heaven's very atmosphere.
Lo! I have dwelt with Thee, Lord. Let me die.
I could no more through all Eternity.

March, 1895.

THERE WAS A MAN.

I.

There was a man who saw God face to face.
His countenance and vestments evermore
Glowed with a light that never shone before,
Saving from him who saw God face to face.
And men, anear him for a little space,
Were sorely vexed at the unwonted light.
Those whom the light did blind rose angrily,
They bore his body to a mountain height
And nailed it to a tree; then went their way;
And he resisted not nor said them nay,
Because that he had seen God face to face.

II.

There was a Man who saw Life face to face
And ever as he walked from day to day,
The deathless mystery of being lay
Plain as the path he trod in loneliness;
And each deep-hid inscription could he trace;
How men have fought and loved and fought again;
How in lone darkness souls cried out for pain;
How each green foot of sod from sea to sea
Was red with blood of men slain wantonly;
How tears of pity warm as summer rain
Again and ever washed the stains away,
Leaving to Love, at last, the victory.
Above the strife and hate and fever pain,
The squalid talk and walk of sordid men,
He saw the vision changeless as the stars

That shone through temple gates or prison bars,
Or to the body nailed upon the tree,
Through each mean action of the life that is,
The marvel of the Life that yet shall be.

III.

So when, anear him for a little space,
Men, whom the light did blind, rose angrily
And bore his body to the cruel tree.
He did resist them not, nor say them nay,
For time's last secret plain before him lay,
And in Man's Life was God there, face to face.

Palo Alto, 1901.

ALTRUISM.

"The God of the things as they are"
Is the God of the highest heaven;
The God of the morning star,
Of the thrush that sings at even;

The God of the storm and sunshine,
Of the wolf, the snail, and the bee,
Of the Alp's majestic silence,
Of the soundless depths of the sea;

The God of the times and the nations,
Of the planets as they roll,
Of the numberless constellations,
Of the limitless human soul.

For there is nothing small,
And naught can mighty be;
Archangels and atoms all—
Embodiments of Thee!

A single thought divine
Holds stars and suns in space;
A dream of man is thine,
And history finds its place.

When the universe was young,
This was the perfect thought,
That life should be bound in one
By the strand of Love enwrought.

In the life of the fern and the lily,
Of the dragon and the dove,
Still through the stress and struggle
Waxes the bond of Love.

Out from the ruthless ages
Rises, like incense mild,
The love of the man and the woman,
The love of the mother and child.

November, 1896.

WHEN MAN SHALL COME.

When man shall come to manhood's destiny,
When our slow-toddling race shall be full grown,
Deep in each human heart a chamber lone
Of Holies Holiest shall build be;
And each man for himself shall hold the key.
Each there must kindle his own altar fires,
Each burn an offering of his own desires,
And each at last his own High Priest must be.

December, 1894.

TO JOHN MAXSON STILLMAN.

A darkening sky and a whitening sea
And the wind in the palm trees tall!
Soon or late comes a call for me
Down from the mountains or up from the sea,
Then let me lie where I fall!

And a friend may write, for friends there be,
On a stone from the gray sea wall:
"Jungle and town and reef and sea,
I have loved God's earth and God's earth loved me,
Take it for all in all!"

Tutuila, Samoa,
August, 1902.

VIVÉROLS.

Beyond the sea, I know not where,
There is a town called Vivérois;
I know not if 't is near or far,
I know not what its features are,
I only know 't is Vivérois.

I know not if its ancient walls
By vine and moss be overgrown;
I know not if the night-owl calls
From feudal battlements of stone,
Inhabited by him alone.

I know not if mid meadow-lands
Knee-deep in corn stands Vivérois;
I know not if prosperity
Has robbed its life of poesy;
That could not be in Vivérois,
They would not call it Vivérois.

Perchance upon its terraced heights
The grapes grow purple in the sun;
Or down its wild untrodden crags,
Its broken cliffs and frost-bit jags
The mountain-brooks unfettered run.

I cannot fancy Vivérois
A place of gaudy pomp and show,
A "Grand Etablissement des Eaux,"
Where to recall their withered lives
The weaklings of the city go.

Nor yet a place where Poverty
No ray of happiness lets in;
Where wanders hopeless beggary
Mid scenes of sorrow, want, and sin.
That could not be in Vivérois;
There's life and cheer in Vivérois!

Perchance among the clouds it lies,
Mid vapors out from Dreamland blown;
Built up from vague remembrances,
That never yet had form in stone,
Its castles built of cloud alone.

I only know, should thou and I
Through its old walls of crumbling stone
Together wander all alone,
No spot on earth could be more fair
Than ivy-covered Vivérois!
No grass be greener anywhere,
No bluer sky nor softer air
Than we should find in Vivérois.

Love, we may wander far or near,
The sun shines bright o'er Vivérois;
Green is the grass, the skies are clear.
No clouds obscure our pathway, dear;
Where love is, there is Vivérois,—
There is no other Vivérois.

December, 1888.

SINALOA.

I.

I dream of gray rocks rising rough and sheer
Above the trembling azure of the sea;
Of long green lines of waves, that listlessly
Break in slow foam, then slip away in fear,
Or hide themselves in rock-pools, crystal clear.

I dream of long white paths, that from the sea
Climb the gray Mother Range unwillingly
Through straggling ranks of palms and pines austere
To lands of Summer, where slow days go by,
Each as it must, but most reluctantly;
Of black mantillas that but seem to hide
Dark eyes undarkened by the darkest night.
All this my dream—but ever by my side
Thou, with the midnight eyes by love made bright.

II.

We stand to-night on an enchanted shore;
The warm slow pulse of the great Summer Sea
Rises and falls the night long, ceaselessly,
Beating its one grand rhythm evermore.
See where before us the stark moonlight falls
On Isla Blanca's bare volcanic walls—
Some shapeless monster breaking from the deep,
Lashing the waves in rising from his sleep.
Yonder in open ocean, hand in hand,
In solemn row, the three Venados stand,
Vast and impossible in moonbeams white,
As they were "Flying Islands of the Night."

Here Cerro Cruz her iron cross uplifts,
Triumphant over her reluctant cliffs;
Beside her armed Vijía, dim and dun,
Guarding the harbor with her single gun;
Low at her feet, half-hid in sea-mists gray,
Shine far the four stars of the Cross of May;
Beyond her headland, with its palm-tree lone,
Flashes the beacon-light of tall Creston,
The last and haughtiest of the craggy horde,
Sierra Madre thrusts forth oceanward.

Behind us lies the town in slumber deep,
And all unrestless, as to thee and me
Man and his strivings now had ceased to be,
Or by some spell were bound in endless sleep,
Leaving us only on enchanted ground,
Alone together, where there comes no sound,
Save the slow pulse-throb of the tropic sea
In the white moonlight beating steadily.

III.

Perchance, dear heart, it may be, thou and I,
In some far azure of infinity,
Shall find together an enchanted shore
Where Life and Death and Time shall be no more,
Leaving Love only and Eternity.
For Love shall last, though all else pass away,
The harsh task-master that we call To-day,
Till each concession Time from Life has wrung,
Like outworn garments from the Soul be flung,
And it shall stand, with back no longer bent,
Slave to the lash of its environment;
Then this great earth we know shall shrink at last

To some bare Isla Blanca of the past—
A rock unnoted in the boundless sea
Whose solemn pulse-beat marks Eternity.

Las Olas Altas, Mazatlan,
January 19, 1895.

A CASTLE IN THE AIR.

Its tall towers rise against the evening red,
The castle I have builded in my time;
With heavy feet I strive its walls to climb,
But each night finds me at its base instead.
Those chambers I would fain have tenanted
Lie far above me in the wavering air,
For built of vapor is my castle rare;
In cloud, foundationless, its walls are laid,
Its crumbling turrets each day reared anew,
Changeful as mist, impermanent as dew.
Content am I, if so my days be spent
Low at its base, whence haply I may see
Its towers majestic pierce the firmament,
And all Life might have been Life seems to be.

December, 1894.

A CASTLE IN SPAIN.

There stands a castle in the heart of Spain,
Built of stone, as if to stand for aye,
With tile-roof red against the azure sky;
And skies are bluest in the heart of Spain.
Castle so stately men build not again.
'Neath its broad arches, in its pátio fair,
And through its cloisters, open everywhere,
I wander as I will, in sun or rain.
Its inmost secret unto me is known,
For mine the castle is. Nor mine alone,—
'T is thine, O Love, to have and hold alway;
'T is all the world's as well as mine and thine;
For whoso enters its broad gate shall say:
"I dwell within this castle: it is mine."

December, 1894.

SANTA CLARA, VIRGEN Y MARTIR.

Now that the throng has left me,
I softly close my eyes,
And one by one before me
The fairest visions rise,—
The best that Life can give me
Of all Life signifies.

I see a sunny valley
Between two mountain chains,
Where roses bloom and lilies
Along the grassy lanes
Aflame with golden poppies
And wet with fragrant rains.

I see from purple mountains
The lengthening shadows creep,
Touching the lanes of poppies,
Closing their eyes in sleep;
And Earth's uneasy clamor
Is hushed in silence deep.

Again, through sprays of jasmine,
A woman's face I see;
I care not what her beauty
Or her attractions be—
There may be many fairer,
But none so fair to me.

Again, a gentle lady
Who lived in other days,
A virgin and a martyr—
So the old legend says—
Who in her name enfoldeth
Delicious destinies.

O blessed Santa Clara!
Her spell be over thee,
To keep thee bright and joyous
As all her roses be;
May her sweet influence cover
The hours 'twixt thee and me.

March, 1894.

MADAME DELICIEUSE.

I know she's coming, and the air around me
Is warm and bright;
The little room is filled to overflowing
With softest light.

No more the shadow of the winter lingers,
Across my heart;
For at the magic hidden in her fingers
The clouds dispart.

Now Care and Faction cannot come to vex me;
Mine is the key
That locks the door to all unrest and passion
While Life shall be.

December, 1887.

IN A WEEK OF SUNDAYS.

In a week of Sundays,
In a year of Mays,
In a life overflowing
With sweet holidays.

Sit beside me, sweetheart;
Touch my hand once more!
And the days shall ever
Follow as before.

Every day a Sunday,
Every month a June,
Every night and morning
Blessed afternoon!

February, 1910.

I SIT IN DARKNESS.

I sit in darkness while the rain is falling
With dismal drip and slow,
With the chill wind adown my chimney calling
A wordless tale of woe.
Through the dull air the formless mist is drifting,
Hiding the hill and plain,
As though the sunlight on the just or unjust
Would never fall again.

A woman enters with a lighted taper,
The fire gleams on the wall,
And in an instant is the gloom and darkness
Faded and vanished all.
I see without no shadow on the landscape,
No sorrow in the rain;
The warmth within the contrast only heightens,
And the wind cries in vain.

I lived in darkness; sorrow and misfortune
Had centered round my head;
With gloomy shapes the path of life was haunted,
To nothingless it led.
A woman came and brought to me a treasure—
All that 't was hers to give;
The shapes around my pathway changed to angels—
They bade me rise and live.

December, 1887.

KOMANDORSKI.

Sail I o'er the icy sea
Where the twin Storm-Islands be,
In a British man-o'-war
(Cold and hard her bulwarks are),
Far to where the haughty North
Sends his eager minions forth,
Tugging at the tawny manes
Of deep-sunken mountain chains,
Great ships greeting with a laugh,
Tossing them about like chaff;
Never they since tides began
Tamed to let or call of man.

Komandorski, grim, defiant,
Stands before them like a giant,
Flinging to the Ocean Chiefs
The stern gauntlet of his reefs.

Crest on crest redoubtable,
Prone at Tolstoi's feet they fall,
And their haughty hosts become
Impotent in angry foam;
While the sea-mists, cold and gray,
Whirl their shredded ghosts away
High to where the storm-clouds be,
The Valhalla of the Sea!

And I watch them as I lie,
Tossing ever helplessly,
In the British man-o'-war

(Cold as steel her bulwarks are).
Through the porthole from the shore
Comes the deep, sonorous roar,
As on Bering's reefs the surges
Chant the great Commander's dirges.

Then, within the sordid gloom
Of my little cabin-room,—
All at once—a presence rare
Lights the unexpectant air.
Thou art gazing full at me,
Thou who art the world to me;
Eyes I have the right to miss,
Lips I have the right to kiss;
All that generous life has brought me,
All there is sweet Love has taught me
Smiles at me from yonder wall—
Glances, smiles, and that is all!

What to me the haughty North?
What his minions rushing forth?
What the huge inchoate ghosts
Of his ever-vanquished hosts?
What the mighty battle-shocks
On grim Komandorski's rocks?
What the moaning of the sea,
Troubled from eternity?
What though cold the bulwarks are
In the British man-o'-war?
Thou, dear heart, hast been with me!
What sweet necromancy brought
Thus the vision of my thought
O'er these thousand leagues of sea?

Thus it chanced—in gathering night
Just one wisp of rosy light,
Strayed from—none can tell you where—
Through the tangling ghosts of air,
From some sunset, it may be,
On the far Kamchatkan Sea,
Through the trailing robes and gray
Of the mists along its way,
Till it, slant and flutteringly,
Fell athwart my porthole here,
Rested on thy picture, dear.

And I bless the wisp of light,
And I bless thy sweet Good Night!

H. M. S. Satellite,
Off Tolstoi Mys, Bering Island,
Komandorski,
August 24, 1896.

CAPE CHEERFUL.

"When you shall come to a great cliff standing northward from Makushin, the volcano, and riven almost from base to summit, from the midst of which leaps a tumultuous waterfall sheer into the midst of the sea, then, the fog lifting, you will leave the cliff well to starboard, and enter the land-locked haven. As I did once ride out the winter there, this haven is for me called 'Captain's Harbor,' and because of the nearness of the haven is this headland with the waterfall called 'Cape Cheerful.'"—Log-book attributable to Captain Cook, Unalaska, 1778.

Homeward bound from the Storm-Islands,* through
the sullen Icy Sea,

On our lee

Rise the savage, swart Smoke-Islands,† which defy
Sea and sky,

Hurling back the waves insistent from their boulder-
cumbered shore,
Evermore.

As though shattering the cloud-rack, dark and tall,
Like a wall,

And the twin Smoke-Islands vanish as a specter of
the night

From our sight,

While the ship still plunges onward, fog-bound in the
Icy Sea.

Suddenly,

As the light is slowly failing—the long twilight of
the North,—

Rises forth,

As though shattering the cloud-rack, dark and tell,
The granite wall

*Komandorski.

†Bogoslof.

Of the shapeless huge Moss-Island,* with her earth-
quake-riven cliff;
Through the rift,
Like a swift-spun skein of silver springs intact,
The cataract,
From the riven granite buttress far into the Icy Sea;
Joyfully
Does it join the tumbling billows, while its spray
Drifts away
With the east wind to the leeward. Banished now
is every fear;
All is clear;
For we know the Cape called Cheerful, and it tells
the haven near.

Like the fog-bound northern ocean, is the weary
course of life:
Doubt and strife
Hide the way I fain would follow; can I know
What to do?
Slowly down my path I wander, sore-perplexed,
Spirit-vexed,
By the cloud-rack of conventions o'er us all,
Like a pall.
Thus, with downcast eyes and somber, come I to the
garden-gate;
Swift and straight,
Leaping from a bank of roses, like a fetterless cascade,
Unafraid,
Rush the children forth to greet me, with a joyous
shout of cheer;
Banished now is all convention, all vexation and
contention,
All is clear;
I have found the "Cape called Cheerful," and I know
the haven near.

H. M. S. Pheasant,
Cape Cheerful, Unalaska,
September 1, 1896.

*Unalaska.

IN TEHACHAPI.

Cold is the wind upon the mountain side,
 (*For she,—my lady,—she is far from me*),
White is the snow and thick the mists that hide
 Thy face, Teháchapi!

Stiffly the yuccas stand in mantles white,
 (*Garments unwonted, carried shiveringly*),
While desert cactus, sands, and storm unite,
 Blending impartially.

But not forever lingers Winter here
 (*For there is always Summer in the heart*),
The south wind whispers, and the hills are clear,
 The thick fog falls apart.

The Summer's gentle touch shall never fail,
 (*Because,—my lady,—she will come to me*),
Blue are the skies beyond the mists that veil
 Thy face, Teháchapi!

Tehachapi Pass, California,
January, 1893.

KAWEAH IN TULARE.

Across Tulare, in the early morning,
The western trades blow free,
Bearing above us in huge broken masses,
The white mists from the sea.

Through wastes of sand, green-fringed with oaks and
willows,
The swift Kaweah goes,
Down to the thirsty basin of Tulare,
Which never overflows.

Its current mingles with the milk-white waters
Of the great silent lake,
Which, to receive it, through its guard of tules,
An opening seems to make.

O'er the dark foothills rise the calm Sierras,
Flushed with the morning red:
From their slow-melting snow-fields the Kaweah,
An infant stream, is fed.

Its winding course, rock-walled by cliff and cañon,
I trace in dim outline,
Through flecks of cloud between the silent summits
And the dark shades of pine.

My spirit wanders to those far recesses;
I scent the fragrant air,
Filtered from glaciers pure, through sun-warmed
meshes
Of pine-leaves everywhere.

I seem to see the granite cliffs uprising
Like mighty castle walls;
And in the breeze, as snow-white banners waving,
The foamy waterfalls.

From each dark cleft, half hid in fern and aspen,
Their music comes to me,
With the one song the pine-tree's ever singing
Blended in harmony.

O river, glorious in the mountain cañon,
Where thy fair birth is placed!
O river, sad, whose waves are lost and swallowed,
In alkali and waste!

O glorious youth, by wondrous dreams surrounded
With fragrance, light, and life!
O sad old age, whose force is dissipated
In idle, aimless strife!

My life I see, as mirrored in the river,—
This only may I know,
'Tis hastening onward toward the Lake of Silence
Whose waters ne'er o'erflow.

The river's windings once again I follow,
Across the desert bare,
By lines of grateful oaks and bending willows,
Which tell the water there.

Along the margin sweetest flowers are springing,
The birds sing in the trees;
Where'er the river goes is life and verdure—
The desert vanishes.

Dear heart, if so my life be like the river,
Its fate be mine;
Let it flow on, its banks be green forever,—
What matter, oak or pine?

Tulare, California,
May 20, 1893.

THE BUBBLES OF SAKI.

In sweet, sad cadence Persian Omar sings
The life of man that lasts but for a day—
A phantom caravan that hastes away,
On to the chaos of Insensate Things.

"The Eternal Saki from that bowl hath poured
Millions of bubbles like us, and shall pour."
The life of man, a half-unspoken word,
A fleck of foam tossed on an unknown shore.

"When you and I behind the veil are past,
Oh! but the long, long while the world shall last;
Which of our coming and departure heeds,
As the seven seas shall heed a pebble cast."

"Ah, my beloved, fill the cup that clears
To-day of past regrets and future fears;"
This is the only wisdom man can know—
"I come like water, and like wind I go."

But tell me, Omar, hast thou said the whole?
If such the bubbles that fill Saki's bowl,
How great is Saki, whose least whisper calls
Forth from the swirling mists a human soul!

Omar, one word of thine is but a breath,
A single cadence in thy perfect song,
And, as its measures softly flow along,
A million syllables pass on to death.

Shall this one word withdraw itself in scorn
Because 't is not thy first nor last nor all—
Because 't is not the sole breath thou hast drawn,
Nor yet the sweetest word thy lips let fall?

I do rejoice that when "of me and thee"
Men talk no longer, yet not less but more
The Eternal Saki still that bowl shall fill,
And ever stronger, fairer bubbles pour.

A humble note in the Eternal Song,
The Perfect Singer hath made place for me;
And not one atom in Earth's wondrous throng
But shall be needful to Infinity.

April, 1896.

TO LADY ALICE COURTENAY.*

I have seen thy name to-day,
Lady Alice Courtenay,
As a treasure brought to me
From the mines of history.
'Tis a stately Norman name
Of a sweet and stately dame,
And the picture that it brings
Of long-vanished stately things
Comes to me as keen and clear
As a painted miniature.

As I gaze, they pass away,
All the vistas of to-day,
All the battles I have fought,
All the deeds my hands have wrought,
All the golden light that fills
Sunny Santa Clara's hills!

Unsubstantial as a dream
Does my lone mist-island seem,
With its flower-bespangled moss,
Wet by wayward waves that toss
Flotsam from the farthest lands
Over Zoltoi's shining sands;
Still the cold gray mist above
Sleep-cap of the Pribilof!

*Alice, daughter of Pierre, Lord of Courtenay; born about 1150; married Edmund (Aymar) de Taillefer, duke of Angoulême; mother of Isabel de Taillefer, wife of John Plantagenet, called Lackland, the King; ancestress of a long line of Cavaliers and Puritans of many degrees, whereof the end is not yet. (Vide Ms. records of Edward J. Edwards.)

Now in darkling mist and spray,
Let the great world fade away,
All that is become as naught
In the vagrant world of thought;
Cast off seven hundred years,
With their burdens, hopes and fears;
Then a fragrance comes to me,
Rose leaves pressed in history.
Sweetly strange and strangely sweet,
Lady Alice—may it be?
I am here alone with thee.
Let me kneel, then, at thy feet;
Ghosts from ghosts have naught to fear,
White the hand I kiss, my dear!

I can see thee, decked for show
In the robes of long ago,
Brocades rich as tapestry,
Laces, silks and jewelry—
All the far-off finery
Men have fancied meet for thee.
Roses bloom along thy way,
Thou a fairer rose than they.
May I pass thy guarded gate
Where thy mailed retainers wait?
They will neither know nor care,
For I tread with feet of air;
To thy walls of cold gray stone
Where the daylight never shone,
Halls of state that ne'er could be
Sun-illumined save by thee!

Pink tipped daisies from the grass
Nod their welcome as we pass;

In the corn fields here and there
Scarlet poppies flame and flare;
From the hawthorn's greenery
Sweet the thrush's call to thee,
And the skylark soaring high
Trills his anthem to the sky—
Lady Alice Courtenay
Fair are Devon fields in May!

See I from the turret-tower,
Where my lady has her bower
How beyond the castle walls
Slope the green fields towards the south,
There thy river finds its mouth
And the great sea ebbs and falls.
There the salt, white spray is thrown
O'er the rocks of Eddystone!
While above the curving bay
In its terraces of gray
Stands thy stern and stolid town
Watching with ascetic frown
All that come and all that go
On the blue waves to and fro,
To the line of hills that rise
Faint against the southern skies,
Where the alien people be—
The white cliffs of Brittany!

All this have I seen to-day,
Lady Alice Courteney—
As it chanced thy Norman name
On the page before me came.
What but name is left to thee?
What is such a name to me?

Lady Alice Courteney,
Thou hast lived and loved for me.
Fairer thou than any rose
That in Devon's garden grows.
Lady, thou wert made for Love,
And when sweet Love came to thee,
Much had he to thee to give,
And one gift was life to me.

Through the long years coming, going
Ever is thy life-blood flowing,
From the hearts of noble earls,
Through the veins of common churls,
Knight and lady, boor and clown,
As the ages follow down;
Of one blood the nations be,
Of one blood art thou with me!

See the rush of history
Strewn with cast-off finery,
And the way of common things
Cluttered with the pomp of kings!
Even blood of Courteney
To the earth must find its way.

Thou a Norman earl didst wed
Daughter thine was England's queen,
And her son was England's king
Then in dim perspective seen,
As the centuries roll away.
Generations vanishing
Move across the changing scene,
Knights and 'squires and men at arms,
Captains of the men-'o-war,
Masters of the Devon farms,

Priests and bishops here and there,
Puritan and cavalier;
Some in silks and laces fine,
Some in simple hodden gray,
Children all of thee and thine,
Of thy blood of Courteney.

(Red the rose of Lancaster,
White his heart that hateth her!)
'Twas the blood of Courteney
Once upon Saint Crispin's day
Stained thy meadows, Agincourt!
Swiftly through the veins it flows,
As the fire of battle glows;

Flows the blood stream as before,
Proudly when the virgin queen
Rode the loyal ranks between;
Sternly when at Marston Moor,
On the heath in suppliance kneeling,
Not to England's lord appealing,
But the Lord of Hosts before!

Fiercely when the dragon came
Stinging, scorching far and near,
Blasting with his tongue of flame
The fair homes of Devonshire.
Then by night the word of flame
"To the watching Pilgrims came."

Then for home and conscience's sake,
With the rest fled Goodman Drake,
That, God helping, o'er the sea
Build they a new England, free;

Grim and stern and harsh were they,
Errant sons of Courtenay;
But they came of hardy stock,
Never in the Pilgrim's grave.
Lay the weakling or the slave,
Dust to dust, but rock to rock!

These the names thy children bear,
Lady Alice Courteney
On the rolls of history,
De Bohun; de Taillefer;
Theirs the shame and glory met
In thy fame, Plantagenet!
('Twas a Taillefer who sang
Till the field of Hastings rang;
Loud he sang and lustily
Fought the fight of Normandy,
Till before his sturdy hand
Harold's crown lay on the sand.
'Twas a peasant's son, but he
Sang his way to history.)
Then the kingly pageant past,
Courteney, Prideux follow fast;
Grenvilles, Gilberts, Drakes at last.

('Twas a Grenville once fought on
Till a day and night were gone.
"What is one day less or more
On the sea or on the shore?"
The Revenge was but a wreck,
Broken, blood-washed was her deck:
"Sink her, split her sharp in twain,
Fall in God's hands, master gunner,
Never into clutch of Spain!")

Drakes for generations ten,
(’Twas a Drake the banner bore
To the New World’s farthest shore.)
After Drake comes Elderkin,
Waldo, Hawley, follow yet,
Names for history to forget.
(One alone the ages may
Claim to-morrow as to-day.
To the heart of nature dear,
“Far in depths of history
Sounds the voice that speaketh cheer.”
He who tells one of her meanings
Of the earth shall master be.)

Whatso’er their rank or fame,
Lady Alice all must claim.
Lords they are not, knights nor earls;
Nor, it may be, clowns nor churls,
Lady, wouldst thy children scan?
Thou shalt see the Common Man.

As the centuries come and go,
Through their veins thy blood shall flow;
For the fairest Time has moulded,
Or in softest garments folded,
Comes at last in nature’s plan
To her simple Common Man.

And thus hast thou come to me,
Lady Alice Courteney!

—St. Paul of the Pribilof, July 26, 1896.

TO MELVILLE BEST ANDERSON.*

I.

Good friend, your message comes to me
Far-tost across a winter's sea,
And once again, as in a dream,
In your Etruscan town I seem.
Once more in sunset's reddening haze
San Miniato's spire's ablaze.
The last long rays slow fade away
On thy gray hills, Fiesole!
Once more across these thirty years,
Rich with their shimmering hopes and fears,
Beyond our Santa Clara's dales
I see your Arno's winding vales,
Gorged with the laurel-green and pine,
Slip from the "wind-grieved Apennine."
While still upon my garden wall
Thick leaves of Vallombrosa fall.

II.

O, regal city of the flowers!
What glory thine! What fortune ours!
Thou wert the home of deeds divine,
The chosen of the ages thine.
Thine, austere poets who could tell
The inmost truths of Heaven and Hell.
Thy grim old sophist pulled the strings
That shift the destinies of kings.

*In answer to "La Capponcina," a poem in appreciation of Florence.

Thine, artists who on canvas wrought
The fairest forms that men have sought.
Thine, Cimabue's first approach,
Thine, Raphael with the silken touch.
Thine, sweet girl-faces that we know—
The loves of Fra Angelico.
Thine, Vinci, humanest of men,
His like no world shall see again.
Sculptors and painters come and go,
And still supreme thine Angelo.
Thine, those who mastering lands and times,
Wrote deathless themes in jagged rhymes.
Here in thy Duomo unafraid
Thy great evangelist has prayed.
There is no gift Time can bestow
That thou, O Florence, dost not know!

III.

Lorenzo's city, can it be
Thou livest but in history?
Are all the glories of thy race
Dissolved in sordid commonplace?
Seekst thou on an unfriendly shore
The petty pillage of the Moor!
O, Florence, thou shalt rise again,
Thy deeds once more be deeds of men!
Such real men the ages know
Crowded thy Ponte Vecchio.
Not stage-struck singers of the day
With "endless dirges to decay."
Even thy Ghibelline and Guelph
Lusted for power and not for pelf.

IV.

Can Time's revenges farther go!
From Dante to D'Annunzio!
By poesy—O wondrous trade—
Camp-braggarts into heroes made!
Such, "thine red lines of heroes" flow
Where once trod Fra Girólamo!
What loftiest cause has fallen lower,
Down to Giolitti from Cavour?
To what base uses may we come
Catspawing to the Bank of Rome!
To turn away from storied lands
To wallow in the desert sands,
And filch from sword-gashed Arabs, then,
The plunder of the Saracen!

V.

No, Florence, no, this shall not be!
By thy majestic history,
By all thy lives of ancient worth,
By all the fairest forms on earth,
By all the memories we bear,
By Casa Guidi's casements rare,
By all that calls men's souls to thee
O'er snow-dashed Alp or stormswept sea.
Thine was the spirit once which broke
Age-long obsession, which awoke
Old warring Europe from its strife
To thoughts of art, to acts of life.
Let "Africa's dried leaf" remain.
To thine own self come back again.

THE IMPERIALIST.

A dog there was and he held a bone—
(Better let well enough alone):
And other dogs there were, but then,
They were mostly curs, not gentlemen.
So when they cry divide! divide!
He passed by on the other side.
For these be maxims, true and sound,
There is never enough to go around!
And this is forever and ever true,
What is good for me is the best for you!



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